

## Locals conquer the heights of Rhodes



Karen de Jager and Christo Human.

**"At certain points on the Mavis Bank we literally had to climb with both hands holding onto the wired fence as it was very steep and slippery because of the ice blocks we had to scamper over,"**

09 August 2011 | Christopher de Wet

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Twelve runners from various clubs in Nelspruit recently undertook the challenging 52-km Liberty Medical Scheme Rhodes trail run in Rhodes in the Eastern Cape near the Lesotho border. According to Karen de Jager, one of the local runners who took part in this year's run, the scenic route took the runners through various ice-cold slippery water crossings, snow and mud across gruelling mountains. "The toughest of all the mountain climbing is the steep 800-m high Mavis Bank hill, taking the average runner about 30 minutes to conquer.

"The official starting temperature was minus 10°C, dropping to minus 14°C en route and the cut-off time was nine hours," said De Jager. She added that only two of the ladies who entered the run did not make the cut-off time. "The one lady broke her shoulder a month before the race and it was impressive to see how well she raced with that injury.

"At certain points on the Mavis Bank we literally had to climb with both hands holding onto the wired fence as it was very steep and slippery because of the ice blocks we had to scamper over," said De Jager. She added that the other lady joined her during the race and both missed the cut-off time with mere minutes. According to De Jager the high altitude played a big role and made it very difficult to breathe, with the highest point being 2 680m.

"Two of the athletes, Marius and Gerhard Botha, and myself, earned our permanent numbers after we completed our third Rhodes trail run," said De Jager.

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